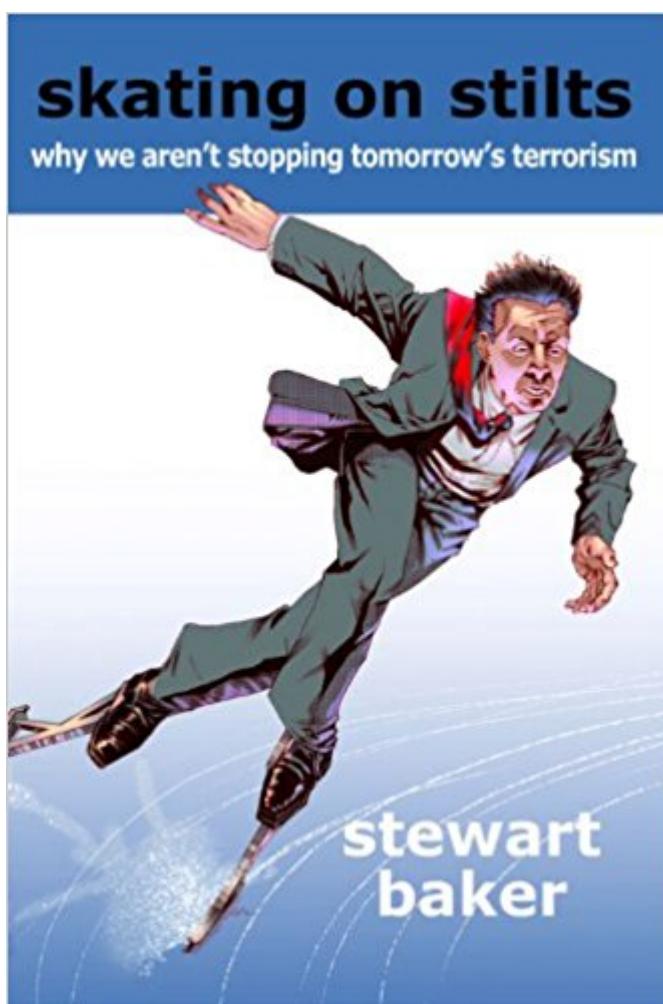


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# Skating On Stilts: Why We Aren't Stopping Tomorrow's Terrorism (Hoover Institution Press Publication)



## **Synopsis**

Stewart A. Baker, a former Homeland Security official, examines the technologies we love&#151;jet travel, computer networks, and biotech&#151;and finds that they are likely to empower new forms of terrorism unless we change our current course a few degrees and overcome resistance to change from business, foreign governments, and privacy advocates. He draws on his Homeland Security experience to show how that was done in the case of jet travel and border security but concludes that heading off disasters in computer networks and biotech will require a hardheaded recognition that privacy must sometimes yield to security, especially as technology changes the risks to both.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

This book provides a rather narrow account of the legal issues that have impacted on what used to be known as the Global War on Terrorism. Stewart Baker is a lawyer who worked in the General Counsel Office of the National Security Agency (NSA) in the 1990's and, after the disaster of 9/11 joined the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) under its second director Michael Chertoff. This book concerns the related issues of protecting the privacy of U.S. citizens and protecting their safety from terrorist attacks. The reader learns a good deal about the workings of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) and the special court that determines if intelligence operations undertaken within the U.S. meet its criteria. The book also covers the legal issues that have become central to identifying and preventing terrorist attacks against U.S. property and citizens. These latter issues

are matters not just of U.S. Law, but also of International Law. Baker provides particularly interesting discussions of his efforts to bring the European Union into line with what the DHS determined to be minimum U.S. screening procedures. An unintended consequence of this book is that it also reveals how remarkably ill-informed the senior officials at DHS, including Baker, were of the structure and nature of terrorism. In the most egregious example Baker reviews the difficulties he had in gaining access to the records of the Society for Worldwide Inter-bank Financial Transactions (SWIFT). In point of fact it was not a problem, but SWIFT records weren't very helpful either since very few terrorists identify their accounts as "terrorist funds" like a Christmas account.

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